IN THE CLAIMS

1.   (currently amended)   A system for evaluating process performance, said system comprising:

a device; and

a server connected to said device and configured to receive process production capability information data using a computer, from a user via said device, said server further configured to:

compile the received information;

display to the user information related to the production process;

compare the received information in the form of answers to respective questions, to reference information in the form of answers to questions developed to encompass an expected range of answers from the users responding to the questions, wherein each question is related to at least one category of the production process;

display the results of the compared information to the user via said device wherein the results include a numerical score representing a relative capability of the process being evaluated to perform a desired manufacturing function; and

display at least one suggestion for improving performance of the desired manufacturing function, wherein the suggestions are at least one suggestion is sortable based on the categories of the production process, and wherein the at least one suggestion is based on the received information in the form of answers to respective questions.

2.   (previously presented)   A system in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said server is further configured to receive information pertaining to process performance evaluation categories selected by the user.

3.   (previously presented) A system in accordance with Claim 2 wherein said server is further configured to receive information regarding at least one of a planning, shop practices, and operator skill.

4.   (previously presented) A system in accordance with Claim 2 wherein said server is further configured to receive information regarding at least one of a complexity, conditions, control, error proofing, measurement, and process.

5.   (previously presented) A system in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said server is further configured to receive information including a numerical score that expresses a relative capability of a process to perform a desired manufacturing function.

6.   (previously presented) A system in accordance with Claim 5 wherein said server is further configured to:

assign received information a weighted value:

sum received information weights;

evaluate weighted summed data; and

display results in a ranked order based on weighted data.

7.   (previously presented) A system in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said device is configured to be a server for a network of customer devices.

8.   (original) A system in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said server and said device are connected via a network.

9.   (currently amended) A method for evaluating performance capabilities of a production process by operating a system including a server and at least one device connected to the server, said method comprising:

determining evaluation area categories based on an evaluation of the production performance capabilities of at least one of the process and a part being evaluated;

receiving, using a computer, information relevant to the capabilities of the production process within the evaluation categories;

compiling the received information;

comparing the received information in the form of answers to respective questions, to reference information in the form of answers to questions developed to encompass an expected range of answers from the users responding to the questions, wherein each question is related to at least one category of the production process;

displaying the results to the user via the device wherein the results include a numerical score representing a relative capability of the process being evaluated to perform a desired manufacturing function; and

displaying at least one suggestion for improving performance of the desired manufacturing function, wherein the ~~suggestions-are~~ at least one suggestion is sortable based on the categories of the production process, and wherein the at least one suggestion is based on the received information in the form of answers to respective questions.

10.   (original) A method in accordance with Claim 9 further comprising assigning a weight factor to information received within each evaluation category.

11.   (original) A method in accordance with Claim 10 wherein comparing the received information further comprises determining a relative capability of the production process to perform a desired manufacturing function.

12.   (original) A method in accordance with Claim 10 wherein displaying the results further comprises numerically ranking the production process evaluation areas based on the results.

13.   (original) A method in accordance with Claim 10 wherein displaying the results further comprises displaying the results in a format that facilitates comparisons between a plurality of production process evaluation areas.

14.　　(original)　A method in accordance with Claim 10 wherein determining evaluation area categories further comprises selecting at least one evaluation area category that represents at least one of production complexity, conditions, control, error proofing, measurement, operator skill, planning, process, and shop practices.

15.　　(currently amended)　A method for evaluating performance of a production process using a network connecting a plurality of users, the network including a server and a plurality of user display devices, said method comprising:

~~receieving~~receiving, from the users using a computer, information concerning evaluation categories relevant to the production process;

assigning each evaluation category at least one weighted factor that normalizes the received information with respect to a relative contribution to a process capability improvement of the received information;

compiling the information received from the users with the server;

evaluating the received information in the form of answers to respective questions, in comparison to reference information in the form of answers to questions developed to encompass an expected range of answers from the users responding to the questions, wherein each question is related to at least one category of the production process;

displaying the results to the users wherein the results include a numerical score representing a relative capability of the process being evaluated to perform a desired manufacturing function; and

displaying at least one suggestion for improving performance of the desired manufacturing function, wherein the ~~suggestions are~~ at least one suggestion is sortable to the plurality of users based on the categories of the production process, and wherein the at least one suggestion is based on the received information in the form of answers to respective questions.

16.   (original) A method in accordance with Claim 15 wherein at least one user is physically remote from another user, displaying the results further comprises displaying the results in a format that facilitates comparisons between the evaluation areas.

17.   (original) A method in accordance with Claim 16 wherein soliciting from the users information further comprises soliciting information relevant to at least one of production complexity, production conditions, control, error proofing, measurement, operator skill, planning, process, and shop practices.

18.   (original) A method in accordance with Claim 17 wherein soliciting from the users information concerning evaluation categories further comprises soliciting information from the users via at least one of a survey, radio push-buttons, and pull-down menu.

19.   (original) A method in accordance with Claim 16 wherein evaluating the received information in comparison to reference information comprises determining a relative capability of the production process to perform a desired manufacturing function.

20.   (original) A method in accordance with Claim 16 wherein displaying the results further comprises numerically ranking the production process evaluation areas based on the results.